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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Spain

DATE: 25X1A6a

SUBJECT Plan to Form a Military Directorate in Spain

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ORIGIN [REDACTED]

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SUPPLEMENT

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1. On 14 November 1946, a CNT member who reportedly is in daily contact with General Juan Beigbeder y Atienza stated that according to Beigbeder, the last steps taken in agreement with the British Embassy in Madrid had resulted in a decision to form a military directorate headed by General Alberto Castro Girona. Beigbeder, as well as Kindelan and Varela, was to form part of it. According to the informant, the plan is for the directorate to hold a plebiscite through which the Spanish people may choose between a republic and a monarchy. Following the plebiscite, a government will be formed which will hold elections. Reportedly, Beigbeder was not in favor of a military directorate, but considered more advisable the formation of a transition government in which the various political sectors would be represented. However, he agreed to the plan for its formation in deference to the opinion of the majority. Reportedly, Beigbeder believed that the Spanish military men would force Franco to hand over power to Castro Girona. On 22 November, the same subsorce said that Beigbeder might be in charge of foreign affairs in the proposed military directorate. He added that Beigbeder had been visited by various CNT members who offered their services to the directorate.

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2. Another informant told source that General Varela, who is High Commissioner of Spanish Morocco and who was in Madrid in early November, had been considered to head the directorate, but that he had returned to North Africa without entering into any agreement of any kind, and that only then had it been decided to select Castro Girona to preside over the group. The same subsorce states that consideration had been given to the formation of a government to be headed by Antonio Goicoechea, Governor of the Bank of Spain, and, further, that the formation of a government under Don Juan's advisor, Jose Maria Gil Robles, also had been discussed. Goicoechea reportedly left for Lisbon on 16 November to see the Pretender.

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3. A member of the Bloque Republicano de Espana said that by 20 November this organization had been asked to participate in conversations regarding the establishment of the proposed directorate, but that the coalition declined to enter into negotiations. The informant added that Aranda and Beigbeder were making efforts to contact the Basque Government-in-Exile in the hope of securing its support to the plan.

4. According to Rafael Henche, Socialist leader in Madrid, the attitude of the Alianza Nacional de Fuerzas Democraticas with regard to the military directorate is as follows: Such a directorate should have as its mission

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the promulgation of a general amnesty, the reestablishment of freedom of the press, the restoration to their posts of government employees who were dismissed as a result of the Civil War, the revival of the various political parties, the return to Spain of exiles, and the maintenance of order. Then, the directorate should give way to a government of national union in which all sectors from the monarchists to the communists would be represented. This government would be charged with holding a plebiscite or general elections through which the Spanish people might choose between a republic and a monarchy.

5. A member of the Izquierda Republicana stated that one of his confreres was in possession of copies of correspondence exchanged between the ANFD and the monarchists on the subject of the military directorate. One of the letters from the ANFD, he said, outlined its position in virtually the same terms as those enunciated by Henche.
6. A republican general, who heads a committee of senior republican military men, said on 21 November that a plan had been presented to him for the enrollment of republican military men on the Spanish Army register. He stated in this connection that, while the establishment of a military directorate and a decree of amnesty would necessitate the reincorporation of republicans into the Spanish Army, he did not wish to discuss reentry into the Spanish Army at this time. At the present moment, he said, steps could be taken to effect the project only through an order from the Spanish Republican Government-in-Exile.
7. Below are biographical notes on General Castro Girona, which are based on statements made by republican army men.

Alberto Castro Girona, a lieutenant general of the reserves, is seventy-two years old. He attended the Academia General de Toledo. As a lieutenant, he was a member of the expeditionary forces sent to the Philippines in 1896. When the Philippine campaign ended, he returned to Spain with the rank of captain. He then pursued studies at the Escuela Superior de Guerra and received a diploma. In 1909, he went to Morocco, where he distinguished himself as a commander of native troops. Although officially the taking of Xauen is credited to General Berenguer, actually Castro Girona was responsible for this victory.

In moments of political crisis, he has proven himself to be rather vacillating and irresolute. In 1929, as Captain General of Valencia, Castro Girona promised to aid Jose Sanchez Guerra, Conservative prime minister and father of Giral Government minister Rafael Sanchez Guerra, in his plot to overthrow the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. When Sanchez Guerra landed at Valencia, Castro Girona changed his mind at the last moment, causing the failure of the plot and the arrest of Sanchez Guerra.

Castro Girona was asked by various Army leaders including Queipo de Llano, Varela and Kindelan to participate in the affair which resulted in the dismissal of General Varela as War Minister. However, he declined, pleading old age as an excuse.*

Comment: Source probably is referring to the determined efforts of Spanish Army leaders, which bore fruit in the fall of 1942, to curb the power of the Falange and of its leader, Ramon Serrano Suner, Franco's brother-in-law. The Army generals, with few exceptions, since the end of the Civil War, had opposed the growing influence of the Falange, which reached its zenith of power under Serrano Suner. The Army's unyielding opposition was one of the chief factors which resulted in the dismissal of Serrano Suner as Foreign Minister in September 1942, although Varela, as War Minister, had to go too.

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-3-

Castro Girona was in the republican zone when the Civil War broke out, and was not molested in any way. He took refuge in an Embassy and aided neither Franco nor the Republic.

At the end of the war, when he had been placed on the reserve list because of his age, Franco sent him on a diplomatic mission to Japan and the Philippines.

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